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ABSTRACT

Educational policy analysts have recognized the need for an educational policy that combines the merits of "top-down" mandates with "bottom-up" teacher discretion. This paper describes the Reading Recovery program as an example of an educational program that balances top-down direction and bottom-up discretion by: (1) providing an overall structure and set of goals; (2) requiring teacher decisions in daily pupil interactions; and (3) developing teacher capacity to make those decisions through intensive professional development sessions focused on improving teachers' practical reasoning. The Reading Recovery program is an intervention program for at-risk first graders that supports an accelerated reading process within a one-on-one tutorial setting. Elements of the program--teaching materials, a typical lesson, student/teacher interactions, and professional development--are described in detail. A conclusion is that the program effectively combines four elements of the current educational reform movement: top-down direction; bottom-up discretion; a focus on individual students; and professional development. Success depends upon a serious investment in faculty development and the formation of supportive district and state level policies. (41 references) (LMI)

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DIRECTION WITH DISCRETION: READING RECOVERY AS AN EXAMPLE OF BALANCING TOP-DOWN POLICY AND BOTTOM-UP DECISION-MAKING[1]

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the
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Educational policy analysts have been begging for a new type of reform strategy which will combine the merits of "top-down" mandates with "bottom-up" teacher discretion (Boyd, 1987; McLaughlin, 1987; Odden, 1987; Soltis, 1988). Researchers have argued that external reforms which control the everyday decisions of teachers can do more harm than good (Boyd, 1987; Conley, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1988; Elmore, 1987; McNeil, 1988; Wise, 1979). Yet, leaving all decisions to teachers will not necessarily bring about reform or equity (Murphy, 1988; Odden, 1987).

The question becomes who shall control what goes on in classrooms? Will teachers control the content and form of instruction that takes place with their students? Will legislators in state houses direct what and how students are taught through state mandated curriculum, textbooks and tests? Will administrators feel the need to centralize and control what is taught in each classroom in order to respond to increased demands for accountability?

[1] *We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Sharon Gilbert and Vicki Bell in the development of this paper.*

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Some maintain that if control rests outside of the classroom, there are grave consequences for teaching and learning. Attempts to externally legislate learning undermine the essential and legitimate authority relations between teachers and students in the classroom (Elmore, 1987, Wise, 1979). Elmore argues that an essential quality of the teacher-student relationship is that students give teachers authority to influence their (student) lives because students recognize and accept the teacher's knowledge and the teacher's commitment to student learning. When teachers are seen by students as mere functionaries, carrying out decisions made by someone else, this authority is eroded (Elmore, 1987).

Without the essential relationship between students and teachers, instructional content becomes fragmented and reduced to narrow "lists" of facts which teachers lecture from for ease of presentation, students memorize for ease of learning, and schools and states use in multiple-choice tests for ease of assessment and accountability. Teachers do not bring their personal passion for the subject matter to their students; controversial topics are kept out of classroom discussions; the emotional environment of the classroom is flat; teachers and students make a bargain not to disrupt the work lives of the other; and neither is engaged in the educational process (Elmore, 1987; Goodlad, 1984; McNeil, 1988; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985).

If, on the other hand, all curricular and instructional decisions are left to individual teachers, how will all students

be guaranteed access to classroom conditions which promote learning? Who ensures that female and male students are treated equitably; that students in the "low" groups receive lessons as carefully planned and implemented as those in the advanced groups; that outmoded methods of teaching are replaced by strategies based on new understandings of student cognition and literacy development (Allington, 1991; Murphy, Hallinger, & Lotto, 1986; Sadker & Sadker, 1984; Stanovich, 1986)?

Given that the most important aspect of education is the interaction between teachers and students, and that true and lasting reform has to take place in the classroom (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Glickman, 1989; McLaughlin, 1990; Richardson, 1990), what is needed now are policies and programs which support a balance of external pressure and internal autonomy in schooling. Recognizing that equity and excellence concerns will not be realized by a complete reliance on laissez-faire classroom and local control, and that excessive centralization and regulation will not bring about the type of student-teacher interactions that further intellectual and emotional growth, a combination of top-down and bottom-up policies is needed.

Such policies would encourage, not undermine, the professional expertise of teachers to wisely make the day-to-day discretionary choices most important to the instruction of students and the improvement of schools. Since legislators and administrators cannot mandate what matters between teachers and

students, they need to find the policy and administrative tools which support those who do matter in their exercise of professional judgement (Boyd, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1988; Elmore, 1983; McLaughlin, 1987; Soltis, 1988).

The search is on for policies and programs which combine an overall direction for schooling with educator discretion to deal with idiosyncratic student needs and the unique personalities, histories, and conditions which shape the distinctive context of each classroom and school. Odden (1987) captures the need for this delicate balance between external direction and teacher discretion: "[T]he administrative trick...is to determine the appropriate mix of necessary regulations made at the top with the professional decisions made at the bottom" (p. 234).

READING RECOVERY: TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP

The Reading Recovery program is offered as an example of an educational program which appropriately balances top-down direction and bottom-up discretion by: a) providing an overall structure and set of goals; b) requiring teacher decisions in daily interactions with pupils; and c) developing teacher capacity to make those decisions through intensive professional development sessions focused on improving teachers' practical reasoning.

Reading Recovery is an intervention program for at-risk first graders supporting accelerated reading progress within a one-on-one tutorial setting. The prescribed procedures provide overall direction for teachers, yet also require teacher

decision-making before, during, and after each lesson. Although there is a suggested framework for lessons, within each lesson the teacher can, and indeed must, respond to the idiosyncratic nature of learning for each individual child. The fundamental strategy relies upon the teacher's careful observation of the child's reading and writing behaviors. The teacher's next move is based on her analysis of the child's actions during each lesson. In other words, the teacher's decisions are not tightly prescribed but are, instead, based on a constantly increasing knowledge base concerning the individual child's strengths as a reader and writer as the lessons progress.

Reading Recovery procedures were first developed by Dr. Marie Clay, a New Zealand child psychologist interested in early literacy development. Clay's research focused particularly upon children who, in their second year of formal schooling, appeared to be at risk of failing to learn to read. She developed an intervention program of one-on-one, daily 30-minute tutoring sessions to provide intensive instruction based upon the individual needs of at-risk children that would enable them to progress as readers in an accelerated manner. The overall goal of the program is for children to become independent readers with a "self-extending system" (Clay, 1991, p. 345) which ensures both the accelerated development of reading behaviors during tutoring and the continued reading progress after the tutoring sessions are ended. Most Reading Recovery children are discontinued from the program after 12-15 weeks of lessons. Typically, Reading

Recovery teachers serve four children per half day. As each child is discontinued, another child enters the program.

Teaching Materials

Unlike the commercially-prepared basal textbooks and workbooks used in over 90% of today's elementary classrooms and in many remedial programs (Allington, 1991; Shannon, 1989), the Reading Recovery program is not a set of materials for the teacher to assign sequentially. Basal reading programs typically feature consumable workbooks, anthologies of stories bound together into single texts, and teachers' manuals describing not only the sequence of assignments but the very words the teacher might say.

In contrast, the teaching materials used for Reading Recovery lessons are quite simple: paper, pencils or markers, and books. Rather than workbooks requiring fill-in-the-blank responses from students, Reading Recovery students use a "writing book" made of blank, unlined sheets of paper. Magnetic letters are used occasionally to help students focus on the visual properties of letters and words.

Characteristics of the books read during Reading Recovery lessons also contrast sharply with those found in many basal reading programs. In an effort to make reading easy, most basal materials for young readers depend heavily upon strict vocabulary controls with the easiest stories defined as those with the fewest words. Gradually, words are introduced, incorporated into stories, and repeatedly practiced. Textbook writers find it

difficult to write appealing stories with strict vocabulary controls. Consequently, such texts have been criticized for their stilted, unnatural language and uninteresting stories (Goodman, Shannon, Freeman & Murphy, 1988; Larrick, 1987).

The books used in Reading Recovery lessons, however, do not have strict vocabulary controls. The easiest stories support young readers, not by controlling the number of words, but by providing predictable texts written in natural language patterns with illustrations that assist the reader in making sense of the written words (Peterson, 1990). Toot, Toot (Wildsmith, 1984), for example, includes words not commonly found in preprimer basal texts, but features a repetitive pattern ("Moo," said the cow. "Baa, baa," said the sheep. "Woof, woof, woof," said the dogs.) combined with colorful illustrations that clearly identify the animals featured on each page in ways that support the early reader's attempts at reading the book. Many of the books used in Reading Recovery lessons are small, single-story paperbacks which are interesting for children to read. The books are organized into levels of approximate difficulty to assist the teacher in selecting appropriate texts. Within each level there are numerous titles from which the teacher selects the child's next book. The number of books children read from any level will depend upon the observations the teacher makes of the child's current reading behaviors. Teacher discretion is essential to the choice of the reading material to be used next (in contrast to simply moving on to the next story in the basal reader).

Furthermore, the teacher's choice of the next book is dependant upon observing the child's moment-to-moment performance as a reader.

The Reading Recovery Lesson

The format of a typical Reading Recovery lesson includes five sequential parts:

1. Rereading of Familiar Text. At the beginning of each lesson, the child rereads several familiar stories from previous lessons to develop confidence and fluency as a reader.

2. Taking a "Running Record". The child reads the story which was introduced during the previous lesson while the teacher records the child's reading behaviors using a coding system called running records. Daily running records provide documentation of reading behaviors that may be examined within the context of a single lesson and over time to determine the instructional needs of each child.

3. Writing a Story. During the writing portion of the lesson, the child verbally composes then writes a message with the help of the teacher. As the message is written, there are many opportunities for the child to closely examine the visual properties of words and the relationships between letters and sounds. The rapid, fluent writing of high-frequency words may be emphasized during this portion of the lesson. The message is read many times as it is written.

4. Cut-up Story. The child's message is also written by the teacher on a strip of paper that is cut apart and reassembled by the child. During this activity the child carefully examines the details of print and rereads the message with fluency.

5. Introduction of the New Book. Based upon careful observation of the child's reading behaviors during the lesson, the teacher selects a book for the child to read that is slightly more difficult than previous texts. The teacher introduces the book in ways that will assist the child in reading the text by discussing the plot and illustrations or talking about unfamiliar concepts.

Within this lesson structure the teacher must constantly make decisions regarding how to respond to each child's reading and writing behaviors.

Student-Teacher Interactions During Lessons

We can witness the workings of this combination of program direction and teacher decision-making by focusing on three parts of a Reading Recovery lesson. In the first vignette, early in the lesson, Mike is rereading a familiar story, one he has read several times. In the second, we observe Mike's reading of yesterday's new book as his teacher takes a running record. Finally, the teacher selects and introduces Mike's new book.

Vignette #1

Each page of Mike's familiar small book features a photograph of an animal and patterned text.

> Mike (reading): I like the dog. I like the bird. I like the chicken. I like the rooster.
>
> Teacher: Which is it, chicken or rooster?
>
> Mike: Rooster.
>
> Teacher: How do you know it's rooster?
>
> Mike: Because I can tell by the red stuff [in the picture].
>
> Teacher: All right, you can tell by the red on the head. It looks like a rooster. What letter would you expect to see at the beginning of rooster?
>
> Mike: R
>
> Teacher: And is there an R there?
>
> Mike: (Nods his head yes.)

Teacher: So, not only do you check those pictures, but you check that first letter. Good for you.

As he reads this text, the teacher encourages Mike to monitor his reading by considering the pictures in the book (the red stuff) as well as the visual elements of the print (r at the beginning of "rooster"). Each of the teacher's responses is based upon her observation of the student and requires rapid decision-making skills. Her overall goal is for Mike to become an independent reader with strategies enabling him to know whether he is right or wrong and to problem solve when he encounters unfamiliar words. Within this brief exchange, the teacher is following step 1 of the Reading Recovery lesson (Rereading of familiar text) while making instructional decisions in response to Mike's reading behaviors.

Vignette #2

During previous lessons, the teacher noted that Mike would occasionally ignore the visual aspects of words during his attempts to reread familiar stories. He might, for example, predict a word by focusing solely on the meaning of the story without checking to see if his prediction was consistent with the letters in the word.

While taking a running record during this lesson, the teacher noticed that Mike consistently skipped the word "my". He read "I love father." and "I love mother." rather than "I love my father." and "I love my mother." Mike's version of the story made sense and was supported by the pictures but demonstrated a

lack of attention to print that would have rendered a more accurate reading. Based upon Mike's previous difficulties and his most recent visual omissions, the teacher decided at this moment to use a variety of instructional techniques to encourage Mike to focus on the details of printed words in conjunction with the meaning of the text. Her goal during this part of the lesson is not for Mike to memorize the letters of the word "my", but to help him use the physical properties of the printed words in conjunction with the meaning of the story.

Teacher: Mike, find "my" on this page. Read the sentence.

Mike (reading): I love...[locates the word] right here!

Teacher: All right. There is "my". [turns to the next page] Where is "my"? Read it again.

Mike (reading): I love my sister.

Teacher: Where's "my"? "My" begins like Mike, doesn't it. What letter is that?

Mike: M.

Teacher: I'm going to mix up these [magnetic] letters. Make "my" with these letters. What word did you make?

Mike: My. Just like in <u>My Puppy</u>.

Teacher: Yes, just like in <u>My Puppy</u>. You're right. Good job! What word did you make?

Mike: My.

Teacher: My. You said it was like in <u>My Puppy</u>. Read <u>My Puppy</u>.

Mike (reading): <u>My Puppy</u>. No, my puppy. No, my puppy. No, my puppy. No, my puppy.

Teacher: Yes, Mike. You really make it sound like that mother is saying, "No, my puppy." Everybody wants that puppy. Read your story from yesterday.

Mike (reading): My whole family is at home.

Teacher: Find "my" in your story.

In this portion of the lesson, the teacher responds to Mike's difficulty by giving Mike different ways to examine "my" in isolation as well as within familiar texts: she asks him to identify "my" in a different, yet familiar book; she connects "my" with the first letter of his name; she uses magnetic letters to form "my"; she has him reread a story (My Puppy, Cowley, 1986) which Mike connects with "my"; and she finds "my" in the story he wrote in his writing book the previous day. Each activity is done quickly and is intended to provide Mike with many opportunities to focus on the details of print.

The teacher uses her observations to help Mike make important connections between what he already knows (his name; other familiar books; what he wrote yesterday) and what he needs to know regarding the word "my". Her decisions, then, are not based upon a generalized scope and sequence chart or pre-developed word list, but on the specific needs of **this** student at **this** moment in **this** context.

Vignette #3

During the final step of the lesson (Introduction of the new book), the teacher must choose a new book for the student to read. Clay (1979) provides specific criteria for Reading Recovery teachers to use when selecting an appropriate new story.

> Choose the reading book very carefully. First off take meaning and language into account. Then from the possible texts select one that is well within the child's control, uses words and letters he knows or can get to using his present strategies. There should be a minimum of new things to learn if the teaching goal is the integration of all these aspects of the task (Clay, 1979, p. 68).

Since Reading Recovery books are leveled according to characteristics of the text rather than tightly sequenced, the selection of the new text is not mandated by a teacher's manual, but is controlled by the teacher. The selection of the new book is usually made before the lesson, but it can be changed based on the what the teacher observes during the lesson. To make the selection, the teacher combines her knowledge of the reading process, the available texts, and the child's responses during the lessons. The new book reflects the teacher's attempt to both support and challenge the reader. Texts that are either too difficult or too easy are not suitable selections for the new book.

In this part of the lesson, Mike's teacher uses her knowledge about Mike as a reader and the available stories to select the new story. I Can Read (Malcom, 1983) deals with family members with whom Mike is familiar, has predictable qualities similar to the stories Mike has successfully read during previous lessons, and provides Mike with an opportunity to use what he has learned during the lesson. To introduce the new book, the teacher discusses the pictures and the characters'

names in order to support Mike's attempt at reading this unfamiliar text.

Teacher: Your new book is called I Can Read. And this little girl is going to tell you about how I can read to all these people in the family. Let's see who she is going to read to. Who do you think this is [points to a picture]?

Mike: Her mom.

Teacher: Yes. That's one person she can read to. Who else?

Mike: Dad.

Teacher: to Dad.

Mike: Grandma.

Teacher: It looks like grandma. In this book they call grandma, Nana. Have you ever heard anybody call their grandma, Nana? Sometimes little children who can't say grandma will call her Nana. What letter would you expect to see at the beginning of Nana?

Mike: N.

Teacher: Find N. Find Nana. Who do you think she is reading to here?

Mike: Her sister.

Teacher: That's another person she says I can read to. Who else?

Mike: Her teacher?.

Teacher: Yes. Look, you can see all the things in the background [of the picture]. It looks like a classroom, doesn't it?

Mike: And to myself.

Teacher: Yes. Myself. Read I Can Read.

Mike (reading): I can read to my mom. I can read to my dad. I can read to Nana. I can read to my sister. I can read to my sister [appeals to the teacher for help].

Teacher: It could be another sister by the picture. We can't really tell. What letter would you expect to see at the beginning of sister?

Mike: S.

Teacher: S. You have checked the picture and you think it might be sister, but there is no S there. What's going to make sense?

Mike (reading): I can read to my friend.

Teacher: Could that be her friend? Does that sound right? Yes. Good for you!

Mike (reading): I can read to myself.

The teacher's focus during this lesson is completely on Mike. The teacher is learning his strengths, weaknesses, and habits as a reader, and his interests, personality, and concerns as a person in order to make decisions about how best to help him learn to read. The idiosyncratic way Mike approaches a story is all-important to the pedagogical decisions his teacher makes during each lesson.

The strength of Reading Recovery is its coupling of this concentration on the individual student with the overall direction provided by the lesson framework and the teacher's authority to expertly decide the next instructional move. Program direction and teacher discretion merge to focus on the needs of individual learners. An essential feature of Reading Recovery is its preparation of teachers to make these expert instructional decisions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the previous vignettes, the role of the Reading Recovery teacher is that of an active decision-maker, capable of making rapid choices based upon a professional understanding of the reading process, the components of the Reading Recovery lesson, the individual characteristics and capabilities of each young reader, and the materials available for instructional purposes. This role is in stark contrast to teachers who are guided exclusively by basal manuals. These teachers are characterized as abdicating such decision-making to the writers and publishers of the basal materials (Durkin, 1979; Duffy & McIntyre, 1982). Such teachers are described as holding a manual, "clutched in [their] arms" (Hoffman & O'Neal, 1984, p. 143), which is used as a script until it is internalized and routinized over time. With the explicit guide of the basal manual "there is no active decision making going on at this level because there is no uncertainty" (Hoffman & O'Neal, 1984, p. 143).

Historically, the use of the basal teachers' manual was particularly important in the first half of this century when teachers were often poorly educated. The extensive use of the teachers' manual was promoted by Gray (cited by Shannon, 1989):

> ...prepared materials are, as a rule, more skillfully organized and are technically superior to those developed daily in classrooms. Because they follow a sequential plan, the chance for so called gaps in learning is greatly reduced (Gray, 1937, pp. 90-91).

Although the level of teacher preparation has risen significantly in recent years, teachers continue to be encouraged to use basal materials by those who argue that teachers do not have "the time, energy, or expertise to develop the types of materials and activities required to meet the goals set by parents and legislators" (McCallum, 1988, pp. 205-206).

If teachers are to move beyond the role of a technician monitoring student progress through sequential basal activities to that of a professional decision-maker basing decisions upon the needs of individual children, it is necessary to consider ways in which teachers might gain the expertise McCallum contends teachers lack. Peterson (1990) proposes that teachers need "time, support, access to new knowledge, and encouragements to learn and develop [their] own knowledge" (p. 295). For Reading Recovery teachers, these needs are met through a year-long professional development program.

The Need for Time

Teachers learn about Reading Recovery through a graduate level professional development program that lasts an entire school year. In weekly classes held after regular school hours, teachers meet to learn about their role as Reading Recovery teachers. Instructors for the classes (called Teacher Leaders in the United States) complete an intensive, year-long program in order to teach other teachers about Reading Recovery.

Beginning sessions are typically scheduled in August and focus on learning to use observational tools Clay recommends for

learning what children know about print. When school begins, the new Reading Recovery teachers select four first-grade students who appear to be at-risk in the process of learning to read. Through the use of the observational tools they practiced during the August inservice, the teachers begin to learn about each student as a reader. For the rest of the year, the teachers continue to work with individual students during daily 30-minute lessons and also participate in weekly classes to assist them in making instructional decisions concerning their individual children. Clay encourages teachers to use their observations of children in conjunction with their growing repertoire of strategies discussed in training sessions to

> ...design a superbly sequenced programme determined by the child's performance, and to make highly skilled decisions moment by moment during the lesson. (Clay, 1979, p. 53).

Time is required in a variety of contexts to learn how to make such "highly skilled decisions". School districts adjust instructional schedules to provide Reading Recovery teachers with time for daily, 30-minute lessons with individual children. In some states, legislatures help fund the tuition needed for graduate classes that are both intensive and extensive. Teachers themselves spend many after-school hours attending classes and preparing course assignments. Preparation for Reading Recovery teachers, then, is not as simple as opening a manual or attending a single inservice session, but requires significant time and

financial commitments by administrators, legislators, and teachers.

The Need for Access to New Knowledge

In order to become an effective decision-maker, the Reading Recovery teacher must be knowledgeable not only about Reading Recovery procedures, but also about ways to observe and document the specific needs and strengths of the student, and ways to most effectively respond to those observations. New Reading Recovery teachers read Clay's (1979a, 1979b) theoretical works on how children learn language, the relationship of language to reading, and the implications of recent research concerning young readers.

The overall intent of the graduate classes is to provide teachers with a great deal of knowledge about early reading behaviors that will assist them in making decisions within the context of individual Reading Recovery lessons. As their knowledge base increases, Reading Recovery teachers develop their sense of practical reasoning. That is, they provide evidence and theoretical groundings for their moment-to-moment decisions about which instructional move to make next (Rentel & Pinnell, 1987). In addition, Reading Recovery teachers report a growing sense of empowerment that they are able to use their knowledge to help children become better readers and also experience a greater degree of respect from colleagues and administrators for their professional abilities (Rinehart & Short, 1990).

The professional development sessions for new Reading Recovery teachers are unique in organization as well as duration.

Although commonly used teaching techniques such as lecture, recitation, and discussion are sometimes used by Teacher Leaders, most of the sessions focus on observing a teacher and student during actual Reading Recovery lessons through a one-way glass. The window functions as a mirror in the room where the lesson is being taught but as a window in the adjoining room where the rest of the teachers and the Teacher Leader are observing during the lesson. A microphone placed close to the mirror enables the voices of the teacher and the child to be heard. During the lesson the teachers and the Teacher Leader discuss their observations without disrupting the teacher or the child on the other side of the glass.

The use of the one-way mirror facilitates the development of knowledge about children as readers and the role of teachers during Reading Recovery lessons by placing teacher development sessions squarely within the context of an authentic lesson. As the lesson progresses, the teachers observing the lesson are challenged by the Teacher Leader to closely observe both the teacher and the child and to freely discuss their thoughts and ideas about how the lesson is progressing. Decisions made by the teacher during the lesson are sometimes questioned by the teachers on the other side of the mirror. Such opportunities to critically evaluate instructional decision-making during a lesson provides teachers with opportunities to clarify emerging notions about how lessons are organized and to examine their own beliefs about the quality of the decisions made by the teacher as the

lesson progresses. The role of the Teacher Leader during this process is to assist teachers in analyzing their observations rather than to provide simple answers to questions or concerns.

For example, in the following vignette, the teachers observing the lesson have noticed that the student appears to be consistently looking at her teacher for confirmation that she is reading correctly. One of the teachers (Sally), has a similar problem with one of her own students and asks the Teacher Leader about ways to handle similar situations.

> Sally: Would that be a good point to say, "What do you know?" Or try to get the kid to go back and use the picture?
>
> Teacher Leader: And what is your purpose when you say that?
>
> Sally: I want the child to figure it out.
>
> Teacher Leader: Is accuracy your concern?
>
> Sally: For me, right now, it's not so much accuracy as dependency. I mean, I have one that "plays tennis" [looking back and forth] with me right now. I want him to know the first thing you don't do is look at me. Try something else. I'm trying to break that pattern right now. It makes me wonder if I'm giving too much help.

For Sally, observing another teacher's lesson and talking about her thoughts and concerns provides an opportunity to think reflectively on her own practice and to critically examine not only the decisions being made by the teacher behind the glass, but her own decisions as well.

Following the "behind the glass" observation of one or two lessons, a follow-up session is usually held with the teachers

who presented the lessons behind the mirror. Questions from teachers on both sides of the glass are thoroughly discussed. It is a time for teachers to integrate theoretical literature, information from lectures and recitations and their own practice during daily lessons.

In an 1980 analysis of 200 research studies examining the effectiveness of staff development programs, Joyce and Showers identified five components typically found in effective programs: 1) presentation of theory or description, 2) modeling or demonstration, 3) simulated or actual practice, 4) feedback, and 5) coaching. They concluded, however, that the use of individual components were much less effective than a combination of two or more. All five components are found in the program to support the professional development of Reading Recovery teachers. The first four are most commonly found within the graduate classes. The fifth, however, coaching, takes place during site visits as the Teacher Leader travels to individual schools to observe lessons by each teacher.

The Need for Support

The organization of the Reading Recovery professional development program supports teachers by providing ample time and opportunity to develop the knowledge required for successful decision-making. The program also provides a great deal of support for new Reading Recovery teachers in a variety of ways. Classes are typically small (4-15 teachers) enabling teachers to rapidly get to know the Teacher Leaders and fellow classmates.

During the year, a sense of camaraderie develops among the teachers, particularly as each takes a turn teaching behind the glass. Such close observation of a single teacher's practice is not common within education today and demands a level of professionalism that ensures teachers that the risks they are taking will contribute significantly to the knowledge of the group as a whole.

As they study and learn, the teachers also develop a shared vocabulary that is easily understood by other Reading Recovery teachers, but not always understood by casual observers. An administrator, for example, once observed a lesson behind the one-way mirror and remarked that trying to understand the discussion was like listening in on a discussion in a foreign country. Developing a common vocabulary (e.g., "monitoring", "in-the-known", "discontinuing"), enables Reading Recovery teachers to talk about their enhanced understanding of their practice in precise and mutually supportive ways.

Additional support is offered during the training year as Teacher Leaders visit each teacher at least four times. Within the context of the actual school setting, Teacher Leaders observe each teacher during one or two lessons and provide individual opportunities to reflectively discuss the instructional decisions made during those lessons. Teacher Leaders are also available for individual conferences concerning students who are progressing more slowly that expected and to assist the teacher by observing and sometimes teaching the student in question.

Although the support offered to Reading Recovery teachers is most intense during the first year of implementation, the program also maintains continuing contact to assist teachers in their professional growth during subsequent years. Small and large group meetings are organized by the Teacher Leaders and held several times each year and site visits continue to be scheduled yearly. Attendance at the yearly three-day Reading Recovery conference is an additional opportunity for teachers to continue to refine their decision-making skills.

Professional development within Reading Recovery offers teachers the chance to gain expertise. With the addition of time, access to new knowledge, and support, teachers can change from being technicians dependent on the basal reader to professionals making expert decisions.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Reading Recovery is offered as an example of the effective combination of four different ingredients in the current educational reform movement. **Top-down direction**, in the form of a carefully designed lesson framework based on a particular theoretical understanding of the reading process and the strategies needed by successful readers, is combined with **bottom-up discretion**, relying on teacher's moment-to-moment observations of the learner and split-second decisions about what instructional move to make next. These attributes combine to focus on **the individual student**, recognizing that each at-risk learner may be confused about different reading strategies and a

lesson aimed at all of them may help none of them. Finally, the program invests deeply in teacher **professional development**, acknowledging that teachers must develop their capacity for improved practice if they are to improve schools.

The success of Reading Recovery has two important implications for other programs and policies aimed at educational reform. First, there must be a serious investment in the development of teacher capacity to make expert professional judgements in the rapid-fire context of the classroom. The typical "everybody-come-to-the-cafeteria-Wednesday-after-school" inservice must be replaced with intensive instruction into new ways of thinking about and observing student learning, coupled with well-coached practice and ongoing collegial support. This type of professional development is costly and time consuming, but necessary if teachers are to become professional educators rather than just the delivery team for textbooks.

The second implication concerns the development of district- and state-level policies which support the type of teacher-student interaction represented in Reading Recovery. Notice the time to focus solely on one learner; notice the availability of different books to meet the instructional needs of different students; notice the time and opportunity for collegial reflection on what the student is thinking and how best to intervene; notice the expectation that teachers will constantly improve their expertise as facilitators of emerging readers.

These characteristics are rarely found in schools in the United States. Current district and state policies often act on the assumption that if teachers are not with groups of students, they are not working. They may assume that planning time is "free time", without value for instruction. Schools are not structured to enable teachers to develop personal relationships and come to know how individual students attempt to learn. Nor are they organized so that several teachers could simultaneously observe the learning behaviors of a student and confer on how best to help him or her. Currently, time and money for ongoing teacher development make up a minuscule part of the yearly school schedule and budget.

To support teachers interacting with students in new and effective ways, there needs to be a serious reconsideration of how we organize teacher-student time and contact. If what really matters in the reform movement is the nature of the teacher-student interaction, we need to reconsider such current policies as: teacher working alone in classrooms with large numbers of students; dividing the school day into subject-matter periods; and one-shot, short-term inservice sessions. Instead, we must organize schools to enable teachers to focus on the individual characteristics of their students and to support teachers' professional growth through intensive staff development efforts.

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